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## CHINESE IMMIGRATION.

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FOR centuries European communication with "far Cathay" was checked by the length and difficulty of the way. Embassies from the Roman emperors and the mediæval popes occasionally reached this distant land. Subsequently, trade concessions were grudgingly granted to certain European nations, and Christian missionaries allowed entrance. Their aggressive teachings, won martyrdom. The missions vanished in blood, and China, with a bang, shut fast her door against Western "barbarians."

Meanwhile, her dealings had been with rude peoples, to whom she was vastly superior. For fifteen centuries she was a teacher; all other nations having real intercourse with her were pupils; and, indeed, during the period of mediæval Europe, China unquestionably was the most civilized country on earth. Under these circumstances was developed an intense national pride—a further source of exclusiveness. It finds expression in all of China's popular names, which represent her as being at the center, while around and far beyond her borders lie the "barbarian" countries—such as "Central Flower," "Central Flowery Land," "Middle Kingdom."

But Europe advanced splendidly, and the present century found the Asiatic possessions of three of its most powerful nations encircling the empire, save on its coast line—Russia, on the north and west; England, on the south-west; and France, on the south. Complications arose, and China felt forced to alter her foreign policy. Diplomatic intercourse with the states of Christendom, and commercial relations upon a treaty basis, were the outcome of the opium war with England (1839-42). China suddenly threw open to the trade of the world five of her most important ports; a migratory spirit has been aroused, and a tide is pouring through the gates of this colossal empire. To other peoples, indeed, China remains practically an unknown land. Some missionaries and a

few explorers are found in the interior ; but the money-loving Chinese are streaming over the world, and quietly establishing themselves, and forming colonies after their fashion, in the trade centers of Christendom.

There are 500,000 in the Malay Archipelago, and 1,500,000 in Siam. Singapore is the distributing point, whence vast numbers annually go into the adjacent countries. The immigration, in 1882, was 100,000 ; in 1883, 150,000 ; and an increase was expected the following year. Singapore is itself overrun with them, and illustrates their shrewdness in seizing upon trade centers. Situated on the straits of Malacca, at the extremity of the Malay peninsula, the touching point for every east-bound steamship, and back, it has risen to great importance. The Chinese have swarmed into it.

“ On my first visit to Singapore, in 1871,” writes Baron von Hubner, “ the population consisted of 100 white families, 20,000 Malays, and a few thousand Chinese. On my return there, in the beginning of 1884, the population stood 100 white families, 20,000 Malays, and 86,000 Chinese. A new Chinese town had sprung up, with magnificent stores, and beautiful residences and pagodas. I imagined that I was transported to Canton.”

Since 1860, 200,000 have entered Chili and Peru—an immense number when one considers the small European population. There are 130,000 in Cuba. They are pressing into the Sandwich Islands. There are 50,000 in Australia, and more than three times this number in the United States—30,000 being in San Francisco, where they constitute one-seventh of the population, and one-fourth of the laboring class ; and, spite of prohibitory laws, they steadily increase, in these countries, in numbers and influence, finding a way to us through Mexico and British Columbia.

These are recent facts, and, whatever may be the past history of the Chinese, they demonstrate a present powerful migratory movement.

The cause is not political oppression. China theoretically is a despotism, and its officials are often cruel and corrupt ; yet powerful local correctives exist, and, upon the whole, the Chinese are the freest native people of Asia.

Nor does the cause wholly lie in the pressure of super-dense population. There are immense fertile districts in Manchooria sparsely peopled ; and though Mongolia is largely desert, yet there remain many broad unoccupied areas, susceptible of cultivation,

and which once supported the warriors of Genghis Khan. Throughout the empire the population to the square mile is but 90 ; in China proper, 180. There are, doubtless, swarming coast districts where it averages from 300 to 500, where agriculture has been pushed to the extreme limits of possibility, and the struggle for existence is intense.

This migratory movement has its mainspring in the Chinaman's wish to better his condition ; and a number of considerations combine to encourage the flow specially toward our shores.

In no civilized country are wages so high and living (relatively) so cheap, as in the United States : in none are wages so low as in China. A workingman in California receives from \$3 to \$5 per day ; in China, from 10 cents to 16 cents. If we consider, then, that on opposite shores of the same ocean are two countries, in one of which wages are at the maximum, in the other at the minimum ; that the one has a sparse population, the other a population remarkably dense ; that America's climate is congenial, and her government liberal ; that competition has reduced the passage as low, in some instances, as \$12, and that, under the "contract system," by which a mortgage is given upon his future wages, the poorest Chinaman may emigrate—we have the conditions that naturally stimulate the Chinese toward us.

The magnitude of the possible inflow is appalling. The empire covers a third of Asia, and holds a third of the world's inhabitants. China proper has a homogeneous population of 360,000,000. A migratory movement in such a race toward a given point, is startling in the extreme ; and unless we are satisfied, as a recent writer states it, that the greatest possible influx would do us no harm, it is wisdom to meet any danger at the outset.

As far as Chinese immigration is transient merely, it may exist to such a degree as to justify exclusion on this account alone. If the Chinaman comes only to accumulate and transfer, we may be disastrously bled. The scale of wages and living is so low in China, that what we regard as a small sum makes a fortune there ; and the impulse of the poor Chinese, whose lot in their own land is often extremely hard, to go abroad where wages are high, and return with the few thousands that bring affluence and ease, is powerful. Vast numbers are acting on this impulse. The Chinese in Australia return annually to China, in gold-dust alone, a quarter

million of dollars. A statement appears that the remittance from California last year was \$15,000,000, and that the sum total for twenty-five years has been little short of \$200,000,000 ! Intrinsically, it is the curse of Irish landlordism ; since the pith of the matter is the exportation of profits, and it is immaterial whether the drain be through lord or laborer.

As a permanent immigrant, we must exclude coalescence with the whites, as resulting in race deterioration. There is, indeed, little tendency, in any particular, to assimilate with us. Blood union is apparently forbidden by natural laws, seeing that the Slavic and Mongolian mixture of Central Asia, is inferior to either stock. In estimating, therefore, the effects of their inflow, we are to consider them as a race apart, bringing over their women, establishing colonies, and introducing their civilization, as illustrated at "Chinatown" in San Francisco.

The question of exclusion is not to be decided by a howl from the "Sand lot." It should be met dispassionately, with a proper understanding of what the Chinese are, and the economic and moral results reasonably apprehended from their presence.

They are a highly civilized and proud-spirited people—a vast, ancient, stoical, and, in many respects, singularly gifted race, from whom have arisen sages, scholars, and patriots of world-wide renown, with a written language, a literature (so full and interesting that a special term, *sinology*, has been coined to express its study), systems of manners and of morals, national and religious traditions, codes of law, and a political structure of most remarkable stability. Their authentic history begins 800 B.C., half a century anterior to the foundation of Rome, and when Romulus, if the legend be true, was drawing his nourishment from lupine dugs. It is the oldest existing government, and older, by far, than any the world has ever known. Its perpetuity rests upon official intelligence, and a wise system of family rule. China is governed by her educated men, who become eligible for office only after passing rigorous competitive examinations. Capacity in those who govern finds a tractable quality in the governed ; for China is the land of filial piety, and inherits the blessing pronounced in the fourth Commandment. The family is the social unit, not the individual. The popular term for the commonweal is "The Hundred Families." "China's vast imperialism is but the expansion of the paternal and filial rela-

tion ;" and filial obedience becomes reverence for law and subordination in the citizen.

The Chinese are not wanting in courage, active or passive, but have not shown warlike tendencies. At times, northern hordes have rushed down upon China's vast plain—Genghis Khan, at the head of the Mongols, and, after him, the Manchius, conquered the country, and fastened their dynasties upon it. Those barbaric irruptions, however, that destroyed the civilization of southern Europe, producing a chaos, out of which has been slowly evolved the present political order, wrought no such effect upon the persistent Chinese, who quietly absorbed their conquerors, and have never deviated from their fundamental conception of government. There is no national debt ; nor does there exist, excepting the descendants of Confucius, an hereditary nobility.

Their elaborate educational system, it is said, has not produced results commensurate with the effort. The memory is powerfully exercised, but the range of ideas is very narrow. The type of the Chinaman's intellect is commercial and muscular, and the struggle for existence, in a dense population, and extended through many centuries, has developed a shrewdness of methods, and a toughness of physique, and a reduced standard of comfort, that make him an ideal trader and laborer. He thrives in any quarter of the world, and under any condition, from the wash-tub, up. In the highest spheres of intellectual activity he is inferior to the Caucasian, but is exceedingly enterprising and active and patient to toil, "a born merchant of probity," a thorough cultivator, and singularly expert in every kind of handicraft ; and wherever he has come fairly in contact with the Caucasian, the latter has given way.

The British merchants of Calcutta are painfully sensible of his presence. Nine-tenths of the trade of Singapore is in Chinese hands. "In 1871," writes Baron von Hubner, "the entire English trade with China, amounting then as now to £42,000,000 sterling, was transacted through English firms. The firm of Russell & Co., besides, owned twenty steamers that kept up the commercial intercourse between the treaty ports. Nowadays, this trade, together with the Russell steamers, has almost entirely passed into the hands of Chinese merchants." Their enterprise is beginning to be felt in the South Seas. The important trade of the Gilbert Islands is controlled by a great Chinese firm ; and the

Americans who have been dominating the Sandwich Islands, are beginning to feel "the earth shake under their feet."

In California their success has been phenomenal. An inferior class (generally) of Chinese workmen, under the immense disadvantage of not knowing our language, or knowing it imperfectly, without experience as teamsters or in the use of agricultural machinery, against race prejudice and the powerful opposition of trade-unions—they are now in more than successful competition with Americans in every article of necessity and luxury. Accustomed, in their native rice fields, to stand all day with the feet in water and the head exposed to an almost tropical sun, they have dyked thousands of acres of the tule and tide-water lands—accomplishing a work from whose rough and unhealthful character the ordinary American shrank. They have taken worn-out and abandoned mines, and profitably worked them. In field and vineyard they are unexcelled as laborers. Along the Pacific Railroad they have displaced white section-hands. The Rocky Mountain coal mines and other mines of that region have become, in many instances, Chinese settlements.

In San Francisco they are the only professional embroiderers, and already control a number of industries. Last year, in "Chinatown" alone, nearly 3,000 were employed in the manufacture of all kinds of clothing, boots and shoes, leather, cigars, etc., etc. They use the best modern machinery, and, quick-handed and intelligent, rapidly become adepts. The Hop Kee Shoe Company, on Dupont Street, at certain seasons of the year, employ 300 men. Their goods largely supply the Pacific coast, and now find a market as far east as Salt Lake City. In the manufacture of clothing, shirts, ladies' underwear, etc., 1,245 sewing-machines were used, and with marvelous dexterity and diligence. These industries are constantly increasing. An American manufacturer, as a recent writer points out, employs Chinese workmen at low rates. Other manufacturers are soon compelled to do the same. Presently rich Chinamen appear who buy out the manufacturers, and the entire business becomes "Chinese."

The cause is patent. The American, with stronger physique, and more inventive, if less imitative, power, is, so far forth, a better workman. But a Chinaman can live on a fourth of what is required by the average American, exercising rigid rules of thrift and economy. He can, therefore, easily underbid the American,

and will always so far do so as to control the situation. The man who will do the work for half the sum, is in universal demand. The American must either lower his wage, or leave.

But it would require the same training of centuries, and under populous conditions unknown to us, for the American to come down to the Chinaman's reduced standard of comfort. Even could he at once descend to it, it would be undesirable. Low wages, with temporary local advantage to manufacturers, would ultimately prove an enduring national curse. Their incidental influence upon production is adverse, in making the laborer less efficient, and diminishing the tendency toward improved economic methods.

Their proper and permanent effect, however, is upon distribution, in giving to capital a larger share of the wealth, and widening the gap between poor and rich—an evil already assuming among us threatening aspects.

In judging Chinese immigration, we distinguish between the "water rats" of Canton and Hong Kong—the opium-smoking, hard-looking, criminal scum of seaport cities—and the clean, bright-eyed, well-bred Chinamen from the interior rice and tea farms, raised in homes where parents exact obedience and children yield it. There are, too, doubtless, noble spirits among the Chinese, many whom the best of us could admire and love. But these come not to us.

The main-stream upon California has been vile. Beyond question it is blighting the Pacific coast. The Californians are the most competent judges, and their opinion, excepting some interested manufacturers, is intense and unanimous. The State is said to be approaching retrogression, and even her millionaires are "gravitating" eastward. We have before us the "Report of the Special Committee of the Board of Supervisors of San Francisco, on the Condition of the Chinese quarter," issued last July. The facts to which they testify, after a personal and most painstaking inspection, including affidavits from prominent physicians and law officers, can scarcely be questioned. They affirm :

That in 12 blocks are crowded, in indescribable filth, 30,000 men, and 1,385 women, of the latter 57 being legitimate wives, 567 professional prostitutes, the residue either concubines or women of doubtful character ; that, beds being unknown, they sleep in bunks, with two in a bunk, "relays" in daytime, and rolls of bedding for sleeping on floors, women and children being stuck in out-of-



the-way corners ; that there are 150 gambling dives, the approaches to which are generally so barricaded as to defy police detection ; that, while there is an "opium lay-out" in nearly every sleeping-room, the public resorts are 26, with 319 bunks ; that there are 35 dens of white prostitution, generally patronized by Chinese, and 69 of Chinese prostitution, patronized generally by whites ; that among the latter especially the rates are extremely low, and that white boys, as young as even 8 or 10, are often enticed into them ; that there is no city in the world where so many children are afflicted with secret diseases as San Francisco, and that nine-tenths of it is traceable to the excessively cheap prostitution of "China-town ;" that the Chinese prostitutes are regularly bought and sold for terms of years, and that organized bodies of villains exist, as the Ye Tung Society, for the purpose of capturing and restoring to the owner fugitive prostitutes ; that gambling, opium-smoking, and prostitution are so intrenched that the police force necessary to suppress them would bankrupt the city ; that the course of justice is systematically baffled by the powerful guilds or secret tribunals ; that, within these 12 blocks, there are 13 Joss Houses, where hideous idols squat upon the altars ; and that for every Chinaman's soul rationally converted, scores of American souls are lost through the increase of vice.

A purer stream of immigration, while lessening these moral evils, would enhance danger on the economic side.

Therefore, Congress, in 1882—as Australia has done—imposed restrictions upon immigration. As these have proven inadequate, effectual measures should be taken, or conflicts will be inevitable. The California feeling is spreading. Those who know China, know her friendship should be cherished ; nevertheless, we must be self-protecting. Traditions to the winds, that do not make America first of all for Americans !

An uppermost thought in the political mind of the age is the national importance of homogeneous population. Its absence, even within the circumscribed area of those white varieties of the race, whose language, laws, and religion have a common origin, is to-day vexing England to the core, and stimulating Bismarck in a course toward the Poles that is brutal, yet sagacious. Many think we Americans have had enough of immigration, even of our own color. The riotous tendencies among us largely come from the foreign element. America's digestive powers are strained to assim-

ilate it, and develop within it that organizing principle which is the Anglo-Saxon's glory. The Negro question, too, remains unsolved. The race has a phenomenal fecundity, and should and must remain distinct, or our descendants will be hybrids inferior to the native negro ancestry. Should the race become vagabond and moribund, it would poison the body politic, and drag down those with whom it is allied. Should it advance intellectually, race struggles are foreshadowed. If this Chinese tide be allowed to keep flowing in, it will corrupt still more our ethnological hell-broth, and add another and a notable element of disturbance. The three great families into which mankind is divided—black, yellow, white—(the debasing effects of amalgamation across color lines indicate this) should develop *within themselves*, and toward what apparently are their respective bounds, a half-civilized, civilized, and enlightened condition.

E. W. GILLIAM.